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Glowing reports show that quality of life in Herefordshire is improving

Herefordshire is a good place to live, thanks to the council, the primary care trust and the police services working very closely together to improve people's lives.

This is the conclusion of a new government assessment – called Oneplace – which is released today and assesses how well public services are meeting the needs of local people. Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire, working with other agencies, are credited with reducing antisocial behaviour and the fear of crime in Herefordshire, as well as ensuring that people are healthy and safe and that children get a good education.

The rating comes hot on the heels of another very positive report. Our children's services are also 'performing well' according to an annual performance rating from Ofsted. This is the third year running that children's services have demonstrated continuous improvement.

Also this month, the Care Quality Commission has reported that Herefordshire is looking after older and more vulnerable people better than ever before. We have moved from 'performing adequately' to 'performing well'.

The rural nature of Herefordshire presents difficulties in terms of domestic waste collection and the Oneplace assessment refers to this. However, in November the council launched its new recycling service. Nearly 60,000 wheeled bins and over 15,000 sack deliveries took place and when the scheme went live, the council collected 600 tonnes of recycling by the second week – three times as much as in the same period the previous year. Over 98 per cent of all residential properties now receive a recycling service. The council also launched this year a new community protection team to respond to anti-social behaviour. Other issues being worked on include the need to improve broadband access, reduce road accident deaths, speed up ambulance response times and improve dental health.

Herefordshire is one of 152 areas assessed in England, with six independent inspectorates creating a single snapshot of an area. They look at how important local issues, such as crime, affordable housing and people's health, are being tackled – and the prospects for improvement.

The assessment uses 'red flags' to signal any concerns, and in this first Oneplace report, Herefordshire has no red flags but is working to win 'green flags' for improvement in next year's assessment.

Oneplace provides an independent overview and will help people see how well their local services, including councils, police and the NHS, are serving their needs and how well these services are working together to improve an area's quality of life. The results are published on a new website launched today:

www.direct.gov.uk/oneplace